

Walsingham Ballads

The Pynson Ballad

Of this chapell se here the fundacyon,
Bylded the yere of crystes incarnacyon,
A thousande complete syxty and one,
The tyme of Sent Edward kyng of this region.

Beholde and se, ye goostly folkes all,
Which to this place have devocyon
When ye to Our Lady askynge socoure call
Desyrynge here hir helpe in your trybulacyon:
Of this hir chapell ye may se the fundacyon.
If ye wyll this table overse and rede
Howe by myracle it was founded indede.

A noble wydowe, somtyme lady of this towne,
Called Rychold, in lyvyng full vertuous,
Desyred of Oure Lady a petycyowne
Hir to honoure with some werke bountyous,
This blyssed Virgyn and Lady most gracyous
Graunted hir petycyon, as I shall after tell,
Unto hir worschyp to edefye this chapell.

In spyryte Our Lady to Nazareth hir led
And shewed hir the place where Gabryel hir grette:
“Lo doughter, consider” to hir Oure Lady sayde,
“Of thys place take thou suerly the mette,
Another lyke thys at Walsyngham thou sette
Unto my laude and synguler honoure;
All that me seke there shall fynde socoure,

Where shall be hadde in a memoryall
The great joy of my salutacyon.
Fyrste of my joys grounde and orygynall
Rote of mankyndes gracious redempcyon,
When Gabryell gave to me relacyon
To be a moder through humylyte.
And goddys sonne conceyve in virgynyte”

This visyon shewed thryse to this devout woman.
In mynde well she marked both length and brede;
She was full gladde and thanked Oure Lady than
Of hir great grace never destytute in nede.
This forsayd hous in haste she thought to spede,
Called to hir artyfycers full wyse,
This chapell to forge as Our Lady dyd devyse.

All this, a medewe wete with dropes celestyall
And with sylver dewe sent from hye adowne
Excepte tho tweyne places chosen above all
Where neyther moyster ne dewe myght be fowne.
This was the fyrste pronostycacyowne
Howe this our newe Nazareth here shold stande,

Bylded lyke the fyrste in the Holy Lande.
Whan it was al fourmed, than had she great doute
Where it shold be sette and in what maner place,
Inasmoche as tweyne places were founde oute
Tokened with myracle of Our Ladyes grace;
That is to say, tweyne quadrates of egall space
As the flees of Gedeon in the wete beyng drye,
Assygned by myracle of holy mayde Marye.

The wydowe thought it most lykly of congruence
This house on the fyrste soyle to bylde and arere.
Of this who lysted to have experyence,
A chapell of saynt Laurence standeth nowe there
Faste by tweyne wells, experyence doth thus lere,
There she thought to have set this chapell
Which was begonne by Our Ladyes counsell.

The carpenters began to set the fundamente
This heavenly house to arere up on hye,
But sone their werkes shewed inconvenyente.
For no pece with oder wolde agre with geometrye;
Than were they all sory and full of agonye
That they could nat ken neither mesure ne marke
To ioyn together their owne proper werke.

They went to reste and layde all thyng on syde,
As they on their maystresse had a commaundement;
She thought Our Lady, that fyrste was hir gyde,
Wold convey this worke aftyr hir owne entent;
Hir meyny to reste as for that nyght she sente
And prayed Our Lady with devoute exclamacyon,
And as she had begonne, to perfowrme that habytacion.

All nyghte the wydowe remayninge in this prayer,
Oure blyssed Lady, with heavenly mynystrys,
Hirsylfe beyng here chyef artyfycer,
Arerid this sayd house with aungellys handys,
And nat only reyrd it but set it there it is,
That is, two hundred fote and more in dystaunce
From the fyrste place bokes make remembraunce.

Erly whan the artyfycers cam to their travayle
Of this sayd chapell to have made an ende,
They founde eche parte conjoyned sauns fayle
Better than they coude conceyve it in mynde;
Thus eche man home agayne dyd wynde,
And this holy matrone thanked Oure Lady
Of hir great grace shewyd here specyally.

And syth here Our Lady hath shewyd many myracle
Innumerable, nowe here for to expresse
To suche as visyte thys hir habytacle.
Ever lyke newe to them that call hir in dystresse.
Foure hundreth yere and more the cronacle to witnes
Hath endured this notable pylgrymage,

Where grace is dayly shewyd to men of every age.
Many seke ben here cured by Our Ladyes myghte
Dede agayne revyved, of this is no dought,
Lame made hole and blynde restored to syghte,
Maryners vexed with tempest safe to porte brought
Defe, wounded and lunatyke that hyder have sought
And also lepers here recovered have be
By Oure Ladyes grace of their infyrmyte.

Folke that of fendys have had acombraunce
And of wycked spyrytes also moche vexacyon
Have here be delyvered from every such chaunce,
And soules greatly vexed with gostely temptacion,
Lo. here the chyef solace agaynst all tribulacyon
To all that be seke, bodely or goostly,
Callynge to Oure Lady devoutly.

Therefore every pylgryme gyve your attendaunce
Our Lady here to serve with humble affeccyon.
Your sylfe ye applye to do hir plesaunce.
Remembrynge the great joye of hir Annunciacion.
Therwyth concevyng this brief complacyon.
Though it halte in meter and eloquence.
It is here wryten to do hyr reverence.

All lettred that wyll have more intellygence
Of the fundacyon of this chapell here,
If you wyll aske bokes shall you encence
More clerely to undersclnde this forsayd matere;
To you shall declare the cronyclere
All cyrcumstaunce by a noble processe
Howe olde cronyclers of thys bere wytnesse.

O Englonde, great cause thou haste glad for to be,
Compared to the londe of promys syon,
Thou atteynest my grace to stande in that degre
Through this gloryous Ladyes supportacyon,
To be called in every realme and regyon
The holy lande, Oure Ladyes dowre;
Thus arte thou named of olde antyquyte.

And this is the cause, as it apereth by lyklynnesse,
In the is belded newe Nazareth, a mancyon
To the honoure of the heavenly empresse
And of hir moste gloryous salutacyon,
Chyef pryncypyll and grounde of oure salvacyon,
Whan Gabryell sayd at olde Nazereth 'Ave',
This joy here dayly remembred for to be.

O gracyous Lady, glory of Jerusalem,
Cypresse of Syon and Joye of Israel,
Rose of Jeryco and Sterre of Bethleem,
O gloryous Lady, our askynge nat repell,
In mercy all wyomen ever thou doste excell,

Therefore, blisshed Lady, graunt thou thy great grace
To all that the devoutly visyte in this place.

Arundel Ballad

In the wrackes of Walsingham
Whom should I chuse
But the Queene of Walsingham
To be guide to my muse?

Then, thou Prince of Walsingham
Graunt me to frame
Bitter plaintes to rewe thy wronge
Bitter wo for thy name.

Bitter was it, oh to see
The sely sheepe
Murdred by the raveninge wolves
While the sheepharde did sleep.

Bitter was it, oh, to viewe
The sacred vyne
Whiles the gardiners plaid all close
Rooted up by the swine.

Bitter, bitter oh to behoulde
The grasse to growe
Where the walles of Walsingham
So stately did shewe.

Such were the worth of Walsingham
While she did stand
Such are the wrackes as now do shewe
Of that so holy lande.

Levell, levell with the ground
The Towres doe lye
Which with their golden, glitt'ring tops
Pearsed oute to the skye.

Where weare gates noe gates are nowe,
The waies unknowen,
Where the presse of freares did passe
While her fame far was blowen.

Oules do scrike where the sweetest himnes
Lately wear songe,
Toades and serpents hold their dennes
Where the palmers did throng.

Weep, weep O Walsingham,
Whose dayes are nightes,
Blessings turned to blasphemies,
Holy deedes to dispites.

Sinne is where our Ladye sate,
Heaven turned is to helle;
Sathan sitte where our Lord did swaye,
Walsingam, oh, farewell!